

Remarks

Applicants appreciate the time taken by the Examiner to review Applicant's present Application. This present Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Official Action mailed June 23, 2003. Applicants are amending claims 2, 6, 10-12, 14, and 22-24 and adding claims 25 and 26. The amendments to those claims provide proper antecedent basis, as prior versions of claims from which they depend introduced the hierarchy, and hierarchy has since been deleted from those claims. Therefore, the amendments do not significantly narrow the scope of the claims. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments do not add new matter to the current Application. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action for the present Application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Applicants request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,619,709 ("Caid") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,774,888 ("Light").

Claim 1 is directed to a method that includes an act of expanding a scope of a search from a first query to a second query. The other independent claims have similar language. Caid does not teach expanding the scope of a search, but rather teaches narrowing the scope of the search as opposed to expanding it. Therefore, Caid teaches away from claim 1 as described in more detail below.

Caid uses the contexts of words in creating and using a database. Many words have ambiguous meanings, such as "cookie," which may have a culinary definition and a computer science definition. The use of isolated keyword(s) during searches can result in many undesired hits. By examining the contexts of keywords in a query, information objects retrieved may be closer to those desired. Note that Caid uses a set of words or terms for a query because context of a keyword cannot be determined when only an isolated keyword (i.e., the keyword by itself) is used for the query. See column 11 at lines 8-15 of Caid. If "cookie recipe" is input as a query, the hits related to cookie as used in computer science may be eliminated.

Because context is used, the use of Caid for queries narrows the scope of a search, and does not expand the scope of the search.

For the same reasons, Light cannot be combined with Caid as suggested in the Office Action. The Office Action states that Light discloses automatically expanding the scope of the search. That passage teaches additional steps to expand the scope of terms within the document by adding synonymous terms, such as those found in a thesaurus. See column 4 at lines 60-63. The passage is related to processing documents, not performing queries. See FIG. 1 and column 5 at lines 14-23 of Caid. However, even if the prior passage related to synonymous terms were used as part of a query, the combination of Caid and Light cannot be sustained because Caid teaches away from using a thesaurus or synonyms because they lack meaning sensitivity. See column 1 at lines 37-38 of Caid.

Additionally, the proposed modification renders Caid unsatisfactory for its intended purpose, which is to *narrow* the search scope, for example, by using the context or meaning sensitivities of words. Thus, there would be no motivation for engaging in the Examiner's proposed combination. To the contrary, there would be a disincentive. Caid is using context of words to narrow the scope of a search. One of ordinary skill in the art would not combine a teaching to expand the scope of a search with Caid due to the diametrically opposite teachings. Therefore, Applicants submit that a combination of Caid and Light cannot be sustained.

Applicants submit that the other independent claims (claims 7, 13, and 19) are not obvious over Caid in view of Light for similar reasons. All other claims are dependent from one of those independent claims are not anticipated by Caid at least for the reasons given for their corresponding independent claim. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-24 as being obvious over Caid in view of Light.

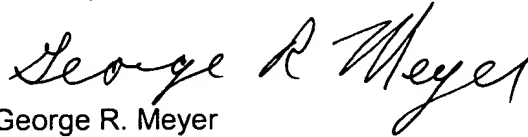
The undersigned attorney and the Examiner and her supervisor discussed the Present Application on January 28, 2004. Applicants thank the Examiner and her supervisor for their time. During the interview, claim 6 was indicated to be allowable subject to a supplemental search (e.g., for recently issued U.S. patents and patent publications having earlier filing dates than the Present Application). Claim 6 is amended to provide proper antecedent basis, however, the amendment does not narrow the scope of the claim. Applicants note that claims 18, 25, and 26 also include limitations similar to claim 6 and would also be allowable.

Applicants have now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of currently pending claims.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-0456 of Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich, LLP.

Respectfully submitted,

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